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SUBJECT Description and Location of Pathet Lao/Neo Lao Hak Sat Offices, Officials and Activities in Ban Nakay Neua, Sam Neua Province, Laos

ACQ Laos, Vientiane (25 November 1971, 6 March 1972)

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Summary: The various offices, sections and activities of the Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS) Supreme Headquarters (Hqs) are located in a number of caves near Ban (village) Nakay Neua, Sam Neua Province, Laos. The Military Supreme Hqs Political Office, commanded by Thonglai and his two deputies, Sitha and Bounsou, is charged with presenting propaganda to military personnel. The Political Office occupies a cave about one kilometer southwest of Ban Nakay Neua. The cave also contains an Ordnance Section and a quick reaction force. Other caves around Ban Nakay Neua contain the NLHS Supreme Hqs Civilian Propaganda and Culture Office, the PL/NLHS General Staff, and numerous other offices concerned with communications, economics, local defense, health care and community development. Top PL/NLHS officials also are housed inside caves in the area. The entire area is under continuous guard. End Summary.

1. The Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS) Supreme Headquarters (Hqs) was located as of December 1970 in a number of caves near Ban (village) Nakay Neua (VII 1956), in Sam Neua Province, Laos. Armed guards patrolled the cave area continuously, adhering strictly to security measures which limited access to the caves only to those persons with special passes. High-level officials were assigned personal vehicles and were accompanied by as many as four bodyguards while outside of the caves. Two Pathet Lao (PL) companies and two unidentified North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalions were stationed within a four kilometer (km) radius of the Supreme Hqs.

2. The Military Supreme Hqs Political Office, commanded by T h o n g l a i and his two deputies S i t n a and B o u n s o u, was located in a cave at VH 192563, about one km southwest of Ban Nakay Neua. The same cave contained some subordinate Political Office sections and some other, unrelated activities. The cave was 500 meters long, 400 meters wide and 100 meters high, and it provided living and working space for several hundred people. Many airstrikes had been flown against this cave but no damage had resulted. The cave had two entrances, one for personnel traffic at VH 194566 and one for vehicles at VH 193563 which was serviced by a road connecting to Route 65.

3. Mission of the Political Office was to present political propaganda subjects to military audiences and to handle some military administrative matters. This section was divided into the following two major sections, each of which was subdivided into smaller branches:

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a. The Propaganda and Training Section. [redacted] In October 1971 the Deputy Commanders were L u a y and P a. This section was composed of six branches as follows:

(1) The Motion Picture Branch commanded by B o u n h i e n g and responsible for filming propaganda subjects.

(2) The Motion Picture Projection Branch commanded by P o r n p h e t and responsible for showing propaganda films.

(3) The Artist Branch commanded by O u n.

(4) The Photography Branch commanded by K h a m l a h.

(5) The Typing and Duplicating Machine Branch commanded by S o m v a n g.

(6) The Liberal Arts Branch commanded by B o u n l i d.

b. The Policy Section. This section recommended promotions and assignments, requested disciplinary action for offending personnel, sent letters of appreciation and award medals to deserving personnel and rendered assistance to disabled veterans.

4. Also located in the cave with the Political Office were several unrelated activities, including:

a. The Ordnance Section. This section, probably subordinate to the Military Supreme Hqs Logistics Office, was responsible for the maintenance of weapons and vehicles and for the storage of ammunition. The cave also housed a vehicle spare parts branch and large quantities of ammunition stored on pallets.

b. Reaction Force. This unit was equipped with four Soviet-made, 4 x 4 armored personnel carriers armed with twin-barreled 14.5mm Type ZPU heavy machine guns.

5. The NLHS Supreme Hqs Civilian Propaganda and Culture Office, commanded by S a n a n Southichak and his deputy S i s a n a Sisane was located in a cave at VH 206548, which had two entrances facing to the west. This office was subordinate to the Central Secretariat Office and had four major subordinate sections:

a. Propaganda Section. This section, commanded by K h a m m a Phomkong and his deputy S o p h a Kotephoutorn, consisted of the following eight branches:

(1) Motion Picture Projection Branch commanded by

B o u n c h a n h.

(2) Motion Picture Branch commanded by S o m l i d.

(3) Local Folk Song Branch commanded by T h o n g b a i.

(4) Newspaper Branch commanded by L i e n.

(5) Photograph Branch commanded by T h o n g v a n.

(6) Local Dancing Branch commanded by P a s e u t h.

(7) Local Music Branch commanded by O u n h e u a n e.

(8) Acrobatics Branch commanded by T e m.

b. Automatic Printing and Publication Section, commanded by B o u n p o n, consisting of branches concerned with equipment maintenance, printing material, editing, proofreading, binding and storage.

c. Training Section, commanded by M y and his deputies S a n i t and S i v i l a i, consisting of branches responsible for administration, entertainment, lesson plans and instruction.

d. News Broadcasting Section, commanded by S i s a n a Sisane and his deputy K h a m s o r n, and consisting of branches concerned with equipment maintenance, editorials, information service, photography, transcriptions and local folk songs.

6. The General Staff of the PL/NLHS Supreme Hqs was in a cave at VH 193566. Two to four men guarded the cave 24 hours per day, and a sharpened bamboo pole fence three and one-half meters high and containing two entrances, surrounded the mouth of the cave. 37mm antiaircraft guns were positioned nearby at VH 195569, VH 194575 and VH 199576, and 12.7mm antiaircraft guns were positioned at VH 201579, VH 203573, VH 213578 and VH 213569. Gun crews consisted of one gunner, one observer, one firing adjuster, one loader and three ammunition carriers. A road passed within 15 meters of the cave entrance. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) (S)

7. A cave at VH 215541 contained the Communication Office and Communication Training Center subordinate to the Central Secretariat Office. This office maintained communications channels between the various organizations under the Supreme Hqs and units in liberated areas of Laos, and it also trained civilian and military communicators. Outside the cave entrance, which faced the northeast, were about 25 small buildings which served as living quarters for personnel who worked in the cave. The houses were surrounded by a bamboo fence with two entrances, and the area was under 24-hour guard.

8. The NLHS Economic Office, commanded by M u a n, was in a cave at VH 192555. Also housed within the cave were sections dealing with agriculture, livestock, irrigation, forestry and cottage industry, as well as a clothing material factory. A bamboo fence surrounded the cave and some small buildings outside the cave, and a guard protected the single gate in the fence 24-hours per day.

9. The NLHS Finance Office, headed by K h a m p h e t, was housed in a cave at VH 195556 along with the Monetary Section, Commercial Section, Import and Export Section, Warehouse Section, and a motor pool. A bamboo fence surrounded the cave entrance and also enclosed about 18 bamboo and thatch buildings which served as living quarters for personnel. (Field Comment: Analysis [redacted] dated mid-October 1971 confirms a cave [redacted] but no buildings were observed and the area appeared to be abandoned.) (b)(1) (b)(3) (S)

10. An unidentified Armored Car Battalion was housed in a cave at VH 196558, surrounded by a bamboo fence with one entrance under 24-hour guard. The battalion was equipped with four commando cars armed with twin-barreled, 14.5mm, type-ZPU heavy machine guns.

11. The NLHS Education Office, or Ministry of Education, was in a cave at VH 304501, 12 kms southeast of Ban Nakay Neua. About 25 buildings were near the cave entrance and a guard force was stationed about 500 meters southeast of the cave.

12. The NLHS Public Health Office, or Ministry of Public Health, was in a cave at VH 194558. The Public Health Chief was A - P h e u y and his deputies were Doctor K h a m l i e n g and K e h. Doctor Khamlieng supervised a dispensary, also located in the cave.

13. The PL/NLHS Hqs Cooperative Store, which employed about 35 people, was in a cave at VH 207568. The store sold cooking equipment, wrist watches, cigarettes, foodstuffs, various types and colors of cloth, and other sundry items, most of which were made in North Vietnam, the People's Republic of China or the Soviet Union. A bamboo fence surrounded the cave entrance and about six buildings outside the entrance. A 24-hour guard protected the single fence entrance.

14. The Community Development Section, Juvenile Association, police station and an unidentified district military unit were located in a cave at VH 270522, which was also referred to as the Special Cave.

15. Prince S o u p h a n o u v o n g ' s offices and sleeping quarters were in a cave at VH 197550. This cave, facing the west, was above ground and accessible by staircase. A secondary road ran from the cave to route 65.

16. General K a y s o n e Phomvihane's offices and quarters were housed in a cave at VH 203554, facing the west. A secondary road led from the cave to Ban Nakay Neua.

17. Hill tribe leader F a y Dang's office was in a cave at VH 200541. Seven small buildings were near the cave's entrance which faced southeast, and a secondary road connected the cave with Ban Nakay Neua.

18. Foreign guests stayed in a cave at VH 202574. A concrete stairway led up to the cave and it was connected to Ban Nakay Neua by secondary road. The cave could accommodate about 20 persons.

19. Other Supreme Hqs Activities located in caves in the Ban Nakay Neua area included:

a. Personnel Section (VH 193566).

b. Police Hqs (VH 198544).

c. Quartermaster Section (VH 198554).

d. Doctor's Section (VH 197550).

e. Planning Section (VH 199555).

f. S i t h o n e Kommadam's office and quarters (VH 200549).

g. Propaganda Department Section (VH 205555).

h. Unidentified Engineer Battalion (VH 233522).

i. Unidentified Antiaircraft Battalion (VH 235522).

j. 31st Artillery Battalion (VH 229525).

k. Hospital (VH 253536).

l. Central Hospital (VH 258528).

m. Secondary School (VH 267522).

n. Vehicle Repair Section (VH 274512).

o. PL Transient Officer's Quarters (VH 274516).

p. Quarters for visiting senior PL officers (VH 270525).

q. Sithone Kommadam Cadet Academy (VH 291509).

r. PL/NVA Friendship Section (VH 177568).

s. Muong Nga Hospital Section (VH 154609).

t. Sam Neua Province Hqs office (VH 131621).

u. Vietnamese Volunteer Unit (VH 244545).

v. 18th Convalescent Company (VH 254525).

w. Military Cooperative Section (VH 201558).

x. Radio Transmission Section (VH 204559).

y. Rice Depot (VH 147609). (VH 173576).

z. Lao People's Party Cadre School, or Solidarity School/

20. Supreme Hqs personnel usually awoke at 0430 hours to prepare for the work day, which began at 0700 hours, broke for lunch between 1030-1330 hours, and ended at 1630 hours. Between 1630-1730 hours, personnel attended to garden cultivation. Dinner began at 1730 hours and ended about 1900 hours, after which some personnel returned to work or attended to personal chores. At 2100 hours a warning signal was sounded, alerting personnel that electricity would be shut off at 2130 hours. Electricity was also turned off and an alarm was sounded whenever an approaching aircraft was heard and troops moved into the caves for shelter. Personnel worked Monday-Friday, reviewed their work on Saturday and had Sunday off.

21. (Field Comment: [redacted]

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22. Field Dissem: Embassy, ARMATT, AIRATT at Vientiane: Sent to CINCPAC, ARPAC, PACAF, PACFLT, MACV, 7th AF, 7/13th AF, TFA/NKP, 7th RRFS, [redacted] Saigon, [redacted]